

above mentioned categories, Zehnder distinguishes the meanings of the lexemes further by emphasising their syntactical usage but admits that some cannot be allocated to any single group. Yet he detects some fifty-seven sub-categories, each of which is illustrated by several examples. In each case, Zehnder lists a couple of standard usages, which illustrate the meaning of the lexeme, before focusing on problem cases. These sometimes give the impression that the allocation of the lexemes to certain semantic groups is forced, and the reviewer would have allocated some to different groups. Yet it should be noted that Zehnder is aware of this problem and allocates several lexemes to mixed groups, which allow for two or more meanings.

Zehnder also offers a theological interpretation of his findings, concentrating on the metaphorical dimension and distinguishing between ethical aspects, derived from the category of conduct/lifestyle, and historical ones, derived from the category of *Ergehen*/path of life. Thus, he demonstrates that ethics can be metaphorically described as a path. Yet instead of taking a particular concept of ethics as his point of departure, Zehnder begins with the path lexemes and uses the resulting categories to outline an ethics, which results in a rather single-sided and incomplete ethical model. By contrast, his handling of the historical aspects appears to have been better thought out. Looking at the 'canonical history', Zehnder demonstrates that Israel's history, which starts with the Exodus, can be understood both as her way *with* and *under* the guidance of Yahweh.

Zehnder finally interprets the results of the semantic analysis by categorising the metaphorically used path lexemes thematically. Although this part somewhat overlaps with the analysis of the lexemes, it sets the results in the wider context of each book of the Hebrew Scriptures. Unfortunately, however, Zehnder's approach lacks consistency at this point. Instead of keeping to the model he has employed up to this point, he combines it with historical-critical theories. Yet the carefully presented results make up for this inconsistency, which makes this part indispensable, as it reveals the wide distribution of each meaning inherent in the nouns under investigation.

A 43-page appendix of tables categorising every occurrence of the Old Testament path lexemes both in the order of the categories and in biblical order, which can be used as an index of biblical passages, and a 54-page bib-

liography make this a useful exegetical tool. However, as the category headings are not listed together with their code numbers in the introduction to the tables, one constantly needs to flip through the book for an explanation of these codes. Yet despite the above mentioned shortcomings, Zehnder's work is to be recommended as a comprehensive and indispensable tool for any exegete with a special interest in semantics and word studies.

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The Voice of Jesus: Studies in the Interpretation of Six Gospel Parables (Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs)

Stephen I. Wright

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Monographie ist ein kreativer Beitrag zur Gleichnisforschung und zur ‚Stimme‘ des historischen Jesus. Sie konzentriert sich auf sechs lukanische Gleichnisse, die Wright als Sprachfiguren untersucht. Er benutzt dabei literarkritische Kategorien von Harold Bloom und zeigt, welche Sprachfiguren bedeutenden Auslegern in der Geschichte der Gleichnisinterpretation als hermeneutische Schlüssel gedient haben (Lukas: Metonymie; Ambrosius, Beda Venerabilis, Bonaventura, Calvin: Metapher, Metonymie; Jülicher: Simile; B.B. Scott: Metapher). Trotz der unterschiedlichen Ansätze hört Wright verschiedene Aspekte der Stimme des historischen Jesus durch die Interpretationen hindurch klingen. Diese Aspekte sind jedoch recht allgemein und nicht den Hauptstoßrichtungen der Auslegungen entnommen, was Wright allerdings bewusst ist. Er selbst versteht die Gleichnisse als Synekdoche: Jesu Vision vom gerechten Leben wird in ihnen anhand spezieller Beispiele deutlich, die gleichzeitig realistisch und überraschend sind und von den Hörern die Rückübersetzung in ihre jeweilige Lebensrealität verlangen. Wright untersucht jeweils die Intentionen der einzelnen Ausleger, welche Einflüsse in ihren Werken sichtbar werden (sowohl zeitgenössische als auch die aus der Tradition stammenden), und die Einsichten, die sie beigetragen

haben. Obwohl sein eigener Ansatz die literarische Ebene und die soziale Relevanz der Gleichnisse zur Zeit Jesu betont, ist die theologische Ebene nicht komplett ausgeblendet: die Gleichnisse zeigen beispielhaft, wie Gottes gnädige Gerechtigkeit im zwischenmenschlichen Leben realisiert werden soll.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cette monographie, l'auteur traite avec créativité de la question de l'interprétation des paraboles et de la recherche de la « voix » du Jésus historique. Il examine six paraboles de l'Évangile de Luc, qu'il considère comme des figures de langage. En utilisant les catégories de la critique littéraire énoncées par Harold Bloom, il montre comment divers exégètes, au cours de l'histoire de l'interprétation des paraboles, ont utilisés différentes figures de langage comme clés pour comprendre les paraboles (la métonymie pour Luc, la métaphore et la métonymie pour Ambroise, Bède, Bonaventure et Calvin, la comparaison pour Jülicher, la métaphore pour B.B. Scott). Malgré les différences importantes que présentent ces approches, Wright discerne divers aspects de la voix de Jésus dans chaque interprétation. Il reconnaît cependant que ces éléments sont plutôt d'ordre général et ne reflètent pas toujours la direction interprétative principale de ces approches. Il pense quant à lui que les paraboles fonctionnent comme des synecdoques : Jésus y enseigne ce qu'est une vie juste par des exemples, qui sont à la fois réalistes et surprenants, et qui invitent les auditeurs à une transposition en vue d'une application à leur propre vie. Wright se penche sur les intentions des exégètes dont il examine l'approche, sur les influences qui se sont exercées sur eux, et sur les apports de chacun. Son approche personnelle souligne la qualité littéraire et la fonction sociale des paraboles, sans négliger leur intérêt théologique : les paraboles fournissent des exemples de la manière dont la justice requise par Dieu doit se vivre dans le quotidien.

This revised edition of Wright's doctoral thesis, completed under the supervision of J.D.G. Dunn in 1997, examines six Lukan parables (The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, The Shrewd Steward, The Rich Man and Lazarus, The Judge and the Widow, The Pharisee and the Customs Officer) from a variety of angles. Wright's concern is 'with the "voice" of Jesus of Nazareth, as a metaphor for his stance, attitude, individuality, personal stamp.' (p. 3). He understands the parables as figures of

speech that require a response, and argues that a responsive reading process reveals something about the 'voice' of the historical Jesus. Analysing selected examples from the history of parable interpretation, Wright aims to show that although interpreters have understood the parables quite differently, something of the voice of Jesus shines through each interpretation. Wright appropriates insights from the literary-critical work of Harold Bloom, adopting his six central tropes (irony, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, metaphor and metalepsis). He identifies the kind of trope central in the parable interpretations under investigation, seeking to elucidate the interpreter's intention, the influences upon him (both synchronic and diachronic), and his insights into the voice of Jesus.

In Luke's narrative the parables function as metonymies, 'summaries or miniature embodiments of the gospel message of judgement and grace, the wondrous reversals seen in the entire story of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and continued doings through the church' (p. 247). A study of the terminology of the Lukan parables shows that Luke did not stereotype the characters nor spiritualise the message of the parables, so that "the voice of the living Jesus" . . . continues to echo clearly in the gospel of Luke' (p. 247).

A different picture emerges from the patristic and medieval interpreters (Ambrose, Bede, Bonaventure). Eschewing the abuse that they have suffered due to their sometimes strange allegorical readings, Wright presents a more nuanced account of their efforts. He shows that they were interested more in the 'divine meaning' of Scripture than in the intention of the 'historical Jesus', and that much criticism (from Calvin to Jülicher and beyond) is therefore based on wrong assumptions. Their interest in the divine meaning of all Scripture led these early interpreters to discover a variety of metaphorical and metonymic dimensions, which Wright is not prepared to write off as inadequate allegories. Indeed, he is able to discover the voice of Jesus in the parables' moral, practical and specific impact.

Turning to historical-critical approaches, exemplified by the seminal contribution of Jülicher, who understood the parables as plain similes, Wright argues that 'despite their idealistic and generalised colouring, [Jülicher's interpretations] allow us to hear the clarity of a voice which brought eternal divine truth to new and vivid expression, with plain implications for human behaviour'

(p. 248). Reader-oriented interpretations, on the other hand, are represented by the work of B.B. Scott, who understands the parables as metaphors. Here, the voice of Jesus consists in the subversive and surprising element of his message.

Wright's analysis of these interpretations is very perceptive but his conclusions concerning the voice of Jesus are fairly general and derive less from the thrust of the interpretations than from his sympathetic reflections on the whole interpretative process at work in those readings. This is in some sense positive in that Wright does not force the evidence to say something he is interested in, but his conclusions might be considered too unspecific by some historical Jesus questers.

As regards his own approach, Wright focuses first on Jesus' contemporary context, understanding the parables as synecdoche. He argues that Jesus intended them to express his vision of a righteous life by giving realistic, but at the same time surprising examples that need to be translated back into the real life by his hearers, thus allowing for a range of different responses and identifications by different hearers. In a second step, Wright examines the parables against their scriptural background, discovering both continuity with Scripture (especially with the Old Testament wisdom literature, but also with the narratives, laws, and prophetic texts) and the 'troping of Scripture'.

The latter aspect is once again developed with the help of Bloom in that Wright adopts his use of tropes in order to show what can happen when writers try to establish their own voice 'despite an inescapably influenced condition' (p. 235). Applying this to Jesus and his being influenced (consciously and unconsciously) by Scripture, Wright points out the irony of 'the absence of any authorizing word, any "thus says the Lord"' in the parables: 'They seem to possess a lesser authority than their great precursors, yet perhaps they possess a greater' (p. 236). The concise but suggestive remarks on 'irony and normality', 'synecdoche and narrativity', 'metonymy and brevity', 'hyperbole and humanity', 'metaphor and fictionality', and 'metalepsis and allusiveness' that are to be found in this section deserve close study by those interested in the use of the Old Testament in the New.

The chapters dealing with earlier parable interpretations show Wright as a perceptive reader, who, while being aware of their shortcomings, stresses their lasting contributions. In the second part of the book, we meet the

creative exegete, who is sensitive to the historical setting of Jesus' ministry, the literary characteristics of the parables, the scriptural influences on Jesus and the theological implications of the parables. The last aspect is not developed in detail, but it is clearly part of Wright's objective. While he stresses the exemplary function of the parables and their down-to-earth social significance in a society in which, for instance, the problem of wealth and poverty was not insignificant, this does not mean that God is absent in the parables, but that God's justice needs to be realised in just human relationships.

Wright therefore differs from his brother N.T. Wright, who has argued that Jesus intended the parables mainly as metaphors that embody God's story with Israel in the light of God's action in Jesus. Stephen Wright's approach is broad enough to acknowledge the validity of N.T. Wright's reading, but he provides his own twist in understanding the linking of characters in the parables with God and Israel as metalepsis, the troping of a trope:

Although the plots of the parables can be explored as reflecting, in a highly suggestive way, God's dealings with Israel and the world, it is best to think of them as arousing such thoughts as evocative echoes, rather than making metaphorical statements to be decoded point by point. What they evoke, by way of linguistic signs that have often pointed to God, is the sense of the interlinking of human and divine worlds, the ancient and instinctive description of God in human language and the belief (perhaps almost equally ancient) that human affairs somehow mirror divine order.' (pp. 210f.)

In the spirit of Wright's study, this quotation may function as a kind of synecdoche exemplifying Wright's ability to appreciate various approaches and to contribute new insights based on the sophisticated use of literary critical insights. His work is highly informative and stimulating, and therefore deserves a large readership.

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